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## TEMPER.

THE wind being north-east, and the thermometer below freezing-point, I have pitched down my pen and taken it up again, to pass from my proper work to some pleasantries about temper. Keep your temper, indeed! In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, you had better get rid of it. The whim of trying to write it down, like other nuisances, has this moment possessed me. In the first place, though, I remark that it is too bad for people to choose an east wind for the display of their peculiar unpleasantnesses. Then tradesmen call for their 'little accounts,' and servants leave the door open; then buttons come off shirts like last year's leaves, and your wife makes tea with lukewarm water. I have a weakness for taking the side of poor people; and only last week gave my card as a witness to a costermonger, whose barrow was upset by some equipage of a bloated aristocracy in Oxford Street. To-day, a discharged cabman, after pocketing a good half-crown, performed a series of nauseous and protracted experiments on a bad sixpence over my area railings, to the delight of some men who were unloading a wagon of coals into my cellar, and a kitchen-windowful of servants. I had given him more than his fare, and was set down as a stingy cheat.

There are many kinds of temper, and I am in no humour to classify them categorically. The moment, however, that I summon the crowd of varieties to my mind, the phlegmatic generally presents itself first (probably because it is too slow to have gone far), as the most permanently irritating. There is no excuse whatever for a man who cannot be provoked. His negative excellence is in itself vexatious. Not only does he get a character for good-nature under false pretences—being considered amiable by shallow observers—but he is directly and personally objectionable to those who really know him. He sets up a fallacious test of goodness. The mischief he does is double: he perverts the judgment of the multitude, and exhausts the patience of the man. Reflect for a moment. He cannot be provoked. There is some unnatural defect in his constitution. It is small praise to a broken-legged soldier to say that he didn't run away; it is equally meaningless to extol a phlegmatic man for never being angry. I daresay he would be angry if he could; but he can't, and I wish I might say there was an end of the

matter. No such thing: he is as obstructive and provoking as a street that is blocked up; he checks the rush of feeling with no soft word, but with dogged motionless hindrance; he fails in that undefinable but respondent sympathy which is mortar to the bricks of society; he is persistently unfeeling; he will be neither with you nor against you; and perhaps his only use is to perfect the temper of saints, who must not only be tried by the froward and malicious, but survive the searching ordeal of dull indifference.

I take next a character in many respects unlike this last, but one with also much negative power of provocation—I mean the compliant man. He is unpleasantly pleasant; he responds, if that may be called response, with so little capacity for opposition. You deliver an opinion, he assents with a smile, and will do the same to your opponent. The sportsman does not value a fish which yields immediately to the pull of the line. An easy capture is an ill compliment to the angler; you prize a remonstrant little fish far more than a great scaly sluggard who suffers himself to be towed at once into the landing-net, and gapes out immediate submission the moment he feels the point of your argument. Just so the compliant man disappoints you; you suspect your own reasons when they are at once assented to. Your wit is thrown away unless it has a little tussle for supremacy. You have said a rich thing; he laughs, but in a tone of vacant readiness which shews that he would have done the same at a poor one. You ask him to carry all the umbrellas at a picnic, to ring the bell, to sit at a side-table, to take down the eldest Miss Scraggleblew, to fill a gap—he complies, gratefully. Anything to make himself agreeable—forgetting, kind soul, that of man's aims and capabilities, this perhaps is not the highest. However, he piques himself upon his amiability, and must take the consequence. I think the compliant man is most disagreeable when you try to take him into confidence. He shuts his book to listen; he lays down his knife and fork; he lets his soup grow cold; he runs the risk of losing the train. Well, you make the first move: you look oppressed, mysterious, sympathetic, and you begin. Before you can disclose your intentions, he approves of them. Before you can deliver your mind, he hugs it in his embrace. He swallows your words before they are out of your own mouth, and still yearns with receptive amiability. Nothing can choke him. He

is affected, interested, he will hear all you want to say; but his mind is small, he does not comprehend you; you go through him like water through a sieve. He takes in all you give, and gets rid of it at once. But perhaps the worst effect of his compliance is, that you cannot really gratify him, or do him a kindness. He has not will enough of his own to appreciate unselfishness or generosity. He is not obstinate enough for you to do him a civility. If you ask him, quite sincerely, whether he will have a leg or a wing, he will resign the responsibility of the answer. Either—which you please. Confound him! How can you please a man who has no choice of pleasures?

Next, of all people who provoke us, few are more tiresome than those who will never do anything thoroughly. Let us call theirs the hesitating temper. Their actions are incomplete. A natural deficiency of brain-structure mars their deeds. They leave the door open; they always remember something to be done just as they are leaving the house, and spoil the effect and good augury of the departure by running back for a pocket-handkerchief, a memorandum-book, or a final order to the servants. But the worst of it is, they won't let others do what they want right off. A matter has been settled. It is an immense fact and saving of time to accept decisions; it clears the way. A small thing done, is better than a big one prepared or in preparation. These hesitating tempers, however, won't let the small thing do itself. The matter, as I said, has been settled, dismissed. Then they say: Oh! but — The luckless decision is caught by the last joint of its tail, just as it was going steadily and safely out of the room—caught by the last joint of its tail, pulled back all flustered and rampant to have a smut rubbed off its nose. Plague on it, let it go with the smut! As it is, the charm of the launch is spoiled.

These people, too, won't eat or drink in a complete way. They put back, ask you to take back a piece. They will have 'Only half a glass, please.' They will be helped 'presently.' They affect a combination of meals, tea and dinner, say, and a cloth over half the table. They save the fly-leaves of notes for memoranda, and mourn over a wholesale clearance of old papers. They dread nothing more than a final decision of little things, and whatever they do, leave some part designedly unfinished.

The above defects, however, are infinitely less trying than those of the sulky, uncertain temper. You may depend, in some sense, upon a phlegmatic, compliant, or a minutely cautious man; you know what he will do on any given occasion; you may shape your course accordingly. But the sulky, treacherous temper defies calculation. All at once, a cloud comes over the face. You have unwittingly touched some sore, and he sulks. There is no honest anger, no blaze, but the coals are alight in the mine, and generally you must wait till they are burned out. You can't get at the hidden heat. It smoulders on; all work is stopped, though the outside looks much the same as usual.

Give me a man who, if angry, will flare up. It is very disagreeable and provoking this sometimes; but if the temper is there, let it come to the top as soon as may be, bubble away, boil over, and be gone. It is best, no doubt, to check your anger, and bite it down. It is well to stop it with a jerk, a painful effort, if need be, pulling the curb of the temper sharp. But if it defies your power, or eludes your presence of

mind, the sooner it exhausts itself the better. I have heard that there is no remedy for a runaway horse so effective as a flogging. He must needs gallop; well, my friend, then gallop. I have a good pair of spurs on—in they go. I have a whip, hard, pliant, heavy—lay on thick. Here is a nice steep hill—up we go. Here is a deep-ploughed field—O yes, keep up your pace, and how do you like it? I remember a horse-dealer who always cured a fault by indulging it. He had once a brute sent to him which occasionally stood still. Farmer Waistcoat had flogged him, and he would not move for an hour. Well, this man took the beast, put him in his break, and drove off. In ten minutes, he came to a dead stand. Breaker said nothing, did nothing. Horse didn't quite know what to reply, tried to look back with his ears, waited half an hour, and then began to move on. No, my friend, said the breaker; you stay here all day. The farmers passed him going to market with uncomplimentary greetings. What, can't you make him move? Breaker doesn't look put out, though. Tck! Farmers drive on, shew their samples, dine at the ordinary, and jog home a trifle merrier, late in the afternoon. Breaker still there, master of the position. The horse never stopped again.

So may we sometimes treat human temper. Put upon the compliant man till he is ashamed of himself; give the sulky something to sulk about. A soft answer does not turn away all wrath; not, for instance, a bully's wrath; on the contrary, a hearty blowing up is likely enough to bring him to his senses, if so be it is administered with zest; plainly, unsparingly, without passion or malice, but without any affectation of pity or reserve. Let him get more than he brings. He is a bouncing fool, who will be a tyrant if permitted. Don't permit him, but give him the hardest metaphorical punch on the head you can. It has a wonderful and speedy effect. He will stop, and gape, and probably end by saying he didn't mean it; which last word may as well be flatly contradicted, to finish him up with.

The respect which is gained, or rather the obedience which is exacted by a cross man, is frequently noticed. It is, however, impossible to force it. No good-tempered man can thus act severity and get his own way; you must be naturally cross to succeed. And then, being naturally cross, it becomes a question whether you really enjoy the full flavour of concessions. No; I think you had better rather be put upon sometimes, than be always arbitrary and dominant. There is genuine pleasure in yielding to another, in resigning your rights. Of course, I don't mean always, because then you would at last have no rights to resign. They must have at least sufficient protection to give a value to their resignation. If you cut off your hand, you can't shake a friend's. But let us pass on.

Talking of temper, have we not all felt how truly fits of anger are called passion. We suffer; it seems as if an alien spirit snatched us up and whisked us out of ourselves before we could stop him. We don't get angry on purpose; we don't light the fire in the boiler, and blow the coals, and listen for the first simmerings of the heat. No. We are in a passion. The mighty mysterious influence, which will, suddenly perhaps, drop us all flustered and ashamed of ourselves, comes on like a squall. O yes, we know very well it is wrong; no one suffers from his passion more than the passionate man. It usually thwarts his object, putting

him at a disadvantage; it exhausts his energy, and even if he manages to escape a quarrel, leaves him to be angry with himself. He feels his mistakes sooner than others, and, no doubt, for this reason, we sometimes deal more gently with him than with the stubborn, sulky, and compliant. A passionate man is often loved. The impulsiveness which exposes him to the spirit of anger has its influence in promoting generous, unselfish kindness. He is warm-hearted, though he boils over occasionally. The common culinary advice in such a case—namely, to take the pot off the fire—may perhaps convey to him the best lesson in the management of his susceptible temper: he must avoid provocation. When he feels the temperature rising, the best thing he can do is to whisk himself off at once, before it be too late. We must use common vulgar expedients to achieve great results. With a slate and pencil, we may calculate our latitude and longitude; the pickaxe leads to gold; the post-laureate must fill his inkstand; Stephenson must oil his locomotive, or all his genius is barren. So we may not despise small causes when we try to check or guide anything so important to us as temper. A little paltry care, a word swallowed, a rising sentence stifled or struck down in us by some simple rule, may at least save us from humiliation, if not secure a victory.

#### A PASSAGE FROM THE HISTORY OF A FAMILY IN IRELAND TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO.

'AND are we so soon to leave this sweet place? Is there no hope of a reprieve for even a few days longer?' Such was the question put by a young lady one bright morning near the close of autumn, twenty-one years back from the present date. The inquiry was addressed to an elderly gentleman, who sat still at the breakfast-table, though the meal was concluded, engaged with a newspaper that had reached him late the evening before.

'I told you already, Marion, that we must leave by the end of the week,' was the rejoinder; 'and there is no use in tormenting me with your regrets. I hate the place and people,' he added with bitter emphasis, 'and it will probably be much longer than usual before we return again.'

The speakers were father and daughter—the former a sickly-looking, peevish, discontented old man, who, with all the appliances round him that wealth and luxury could produce, seemed still unhappy; the latter, in striking contrast, was as bright, sweet, and winning in appearance and manner as the father was the reverse. At the moment we are referring to, she came forward from the window where she had been standing, and from which she looked out on an expanse of mountain, wood, and water combined in such rare perfection as to make Mr Fortescue's demesne of Old Park unrivalled for beauty in the locality.

'And why, father,' she asked again, 'do you hate the place and people? For my part, I confess to liking both; and except for those unfortunate disputes about land, have we not always found them here to be kind and warm-hearted?'

'You forget, Marion,' said a third speaker in rather a sharp tone, 'that, thank God, we are all English—your father's family at least. I suppose you inherit your Irish predilections from your mother; but don't think you'll influence me in your fancies; you won't, I can tell you. I declare I never rest comfortably in my bed in Ireland; I make up my mind to be murdered before the morning every night

of my life here. It was only last night I was bathed in cold perspiration, and really think I must have fainted, for I forgot everything for a time. The appalling noise that woke me—it was that vile cat of yours, Marion, up the chimney, O dear! making such unearthly sounds.'

'My poor cat,' said Marion laughing. 'But what did you think it was, aunt?'

'Think! God bless me, child! how could I tell but it was a man—an Irishman—jabbering some of that indescribable jargon of theirs. I tell you, I never was so terrified. And for my part, Edgar, I think the sooner we are off, and the longer we stay away, the better.'

Mr Fortescue seemed to take little notice of his sister's outburst; he winced for an instant at the passing allusion to Marion's mother; and when directly addressed in the last sentence uttered, he merely looked up from his paper with a supercilious smile, saying: 'How silly, Janet. Where is the use of your fanciful fears? What would you do?'

'Use!—do!' said the old lady, angrily interrupting him; 'put my head under the clothes till I'm just smothered—that's what I do.'

'Pish—nonsense!' said Mr Fortescue, as he resumed his paper.

Miss Janet contented herself with looking daggers at him, and said no more. Marion's aunt was a tall, thin, wiry-looking old lady, with a carriage as erect as if she had worn a backboard from her birth—the image of her brother, with more fire and energy of manner, and much less acerbity in the expression of her face.

Mrs Fortescue, mother to the heroine of our sketch, had been Irish by birth, and was, when married, very young, her husband's junior by many years. She had died in giving birth to a still-born son when Marion was but a year old; and it was said that the loss of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, joined to the disappointment about the expected heir, had still further embittered a naturally irritable disposition in Mr Fortescue. The feuds and animosities between the Irish landlord and tenant had at the time of which we write reached a formidable height; the murder of an obnoxious landlord or agent even in the noonday was no uncommon occurrence, while the sympathy of the inhabitants with the criminal—that dark and most lamentable idiosyncrasy in the character of the Irish peasant—rendered all the efforts for detection in many instances abortive. A wide-spread and skilfully organised system of 'Ribbonism' permeated the country, and offered an obstinate and protracted resistance to the government of the day. Mr Fortescue's Irish property lay in one of the midland counties; and among the sternest of the land-owners, he was pre-eminent in severity, and held in peculiar dislike accordingly. His visits from England with his sister and daughter—the only living members of his family—were of late fewer in number, and shorter in continuance, than they had been, for he was fully conscious of the odium he had incurred among the people, and therefore less desirous of returning. Nor was the feeling towards the landlord at all lessened by his agent, Mr Andrews, a rough, hard-hearted man, apprehensive that some day or other the vengeance that was dealt out with so lawless a hand might haply strike himself down as its victim, and who, consequently, lost no opportunity of exculpating his own acts at the expense of his employer, when carrying out some unpopular project for the supposed improvement of the estate.



'I can't but think,' said Marion, again addressing her father, who, either owing to Miss Fortescue's interruption, or his own disinclination, had taken no notice of her former inquiry, 'that a little more kindness and conciliation shewn to the people here—more, I mean, than I fear Mr Andrews shews—would have a better effect.'

'My dear,' replied her father, 'you don't understand anything about it; they are a thankless set, and kindness would be utterly thrown away upon them: stern determination alone will answer here.'

'A savage, murderous gang, every one of them, man, woman, and child,' remarked the aunt snappishly, and giving an emphatic jerk to some netting that she was perpetually engaged with, attached like a stirrup to her foot. 'I wish we were at home; an aspiration that generally escaped the old lady's lips three or four times a day during her sojourn in 'The Island,' as she always contemptuously called it, as though she imagined it Juan Fernandez, and she a sort of female Crusoe, imprisoned among savages.'

Further remarks were interrupted by the entrance of the butler. 'Sir,' said he, addressing his master, 'there is a person who wishes very much to see you.'

'Who?—what?—to see me?'

'She is the Widow Sullivan—a tenant, sir.'

'You know, or should know, very well by this time, Simmonds,' said his master pettishly, 'that I never see people of that description; let her go to my agent.' But before Mr Fortescue could utter another word, he was startled by the apparition of the Widow Sullivan herself, who now stepped forward into the room; her unexpected appearance evidently connived at by the butler, who was one of the few Irish servants in the establishment, and it was rumoured, closely connected by more ties than one with several of the tenants on the estate. The woman who thus, with an undaunted air, confronted Mr Fortescue, as he moved uneasily in his seat, and evidently seemed much annoyed at the intrusion, was remarkable-looking in the extreme; tall, gaunt, and masculine, though far advanced in years; her snowy hair was drawn back under a coarse white cap, fastened down by a broad black band of ribbon, the only and long-worn mourning for the dead; the eyes dark and piercing, and her long hooked nose, gave her a weird-like aspect, which so startled Miss Fortescue, as the woman came forward into the apartment, that hastily coiling up her netting apparatus into hopeless entanglement, she drew off into the remotest corner of the room, near one of the large windows that opened on the lawn. Simmonds, the butler, as hastily withdrew, but from another ground of apprehension, through the door, remaining in the hall on the watch for the result of this interview. Mrs Sullivan, folding her large gray cloak around her, and courtesying respectfully to the ladies first, and then to her landlord, began: 'Plase yer honour, and you honoured ladies, and beggin' pardon for makin' so bould, but I thought if I could just see yer honour's self, ye'd look to me and mine—God help us!—better than Misther Andrews would. We've been tinants, yer honour, to yourself, and yer honour's father afore ye, this many a long day. My poor husband, dead and gone—glory be to God!—twenty years come last Michaelmas, and my two poor boys—fine likely lads they are—all that's left iv us now, yer honour. But what I have to say, sir, is, that let times come as they might, we niver were behindhand in the rint, and Misther Andrews could tell ye the same; and now, becase the lease is out, we're noticed to quit, yer honour; and sure we're ready and willin' to give as good a rint as any one that comes the way, and a fine, too, iv it's a thing that's required of us, for a new lease. But, anyways, what we hope is, that like an honourable gentleman as ye are, ye won't let us be put out of the place we were in so long.'

'Pray, my good woman, desist,' said Mr Fortescue,

taking advantage of the first possible pause to put a check upon her volubility: 'these things are all settled by my agent; I leave them to him. You must go to Mr Andrews;' and he motioned her to the door with his newspaper.

'But he tould me, yer honour, no later than yesterday, that he had your orders, and that he should be guided by them; and that ye were goin', he said, to put three farms into one—Corney Brian's, and ours, and Ned Delaney's—owin', he said, to the last life in the lease droppin' the other day; and that ye weren't goin' to lave one of the ould stock in at all, at all; and he said, too, yer honour, that it wasn't his doin', but that he was guided by yer honour intirely.'

'If he did, then,' replied Mr Fortescue, in a tone that shewed his temper was rising rapidly, 'that's enough about it. What I say, I mean, and I am not in the habit of changing any directions I have given; of course you and your sons can easily get a place elsewhere.'

'Ah, but yer honour,' again interposed the widow, 'it isn't that at all; but the ould place, where the childher were born—the three I buried, and the fine brave boys the Lord has left me—glory be to his holy name!—where my poor man, too, dhrew his last breath below. Oh, wish! oh, wish! 'twould break the heart within me to lave the home where he died: I niver slep a night out iv that room where he was laid out and waked. Ah, yer honour,' she added with her hands passionately clasped, while tears trickled fast down the haggard cheeks, 'they say that ould threes don't bear removin'. I'm but a poor withered stem this day, God knows; and the storm that doesn't come at man's biddin', will soon lay me low. 'Tisn't worth while, yer honour, to send these gray hairs from undher the ould roof—three out to the wild winds of heaven; I won't be long a throuble to any of ye, and when I'm gone, the poor lads maybe will go and seek their fortunes abroad; but, oh, sir, lave me to die in peace where my darlin' husband died.'

The pathetic appeal that drew answering tears from Marion's eyes, as she stood behind her father's chair, and even alleviated the alarm and softened the heart of Miss Fortescue, had quite a contrary effect upon the stern old man.

'I know nothing about you or your husband,' exclaimed he furiously; 'I suppose he was just the same ill-conditioned vagabond with the rest of you. But no matter what he was, or you either—you need not waste your time by talking—for I won't alter my plans to suit the whims of any old woman; so begone.'

These strong words, but most of all the harsh allusion to her husband, acted like magic upon the poor suppliant; she drew herself up to her fullest height, an angry flush mounted to the pale cheek; with a now unmoistened eye, she cast a withering look at Mr Fortescue, as he sat gloomily facing her, and replied: 'The best wish that could meet ye this mornin' would be that ye might die with as easy a conscience as Mick Sullivan; but I doubt ye will, when yer time comes. I heard them often say you were an unfeeling, cruel man; they said it wouldn't be easy to find the soft spot in your heart, but I thought to-day anyhow I'd thry—and I believe them now. Do your worst—do your worst!' she added, her tone augmenting in shrillness. 'Maybe it won't take a thorn out of your own death-pillow, to think you refused the poor widow's prayer; maybe, stiff as ye spake now, throuble may soon come down upon your own gray hairs; maybe ye'll call for marcy yet, and find none, and think then of the day ye refused to shew it. I could find it in my heart to curse you, I could, to curse you,' she repeated, literally shrieking out the words in her frenzy; 'but for that fair young crathur at your elbow there—God knows 'tis hard to say how so soft a saplin' ever came from so blasted a root. There!' she said, throwing

up her hands, 'I love you to a just God. You are a hard-hearted old man, and you'll suffer yet, as surely as there's a God above, for doing a harm to the widow and her orphan childer.'

So speaking, the fierce old woman strode out of the room and from the house, without even deigning to notice Simmonds the butler, who stood in the hall, astounded at the temerity with which she had assailed a man so universally feared as was his master. When Mr Fortescue could recover the use of his speech, after the unceremonious and unlooked-for onset to which he had been subjected—'There,' said he scornfully, turning to Marion as he rose from his chair, 'I suppose that is a specimen of your interesting Irish.'

'A most appalling old wretch!' said Miss Fortescue, emerging from her corner; 'I'd have her transported on the spot, if I could. I expected every moment she'd have been at us with the knives on the breakfast-table. I protest, I almost saw sparks fly from those fiery eyes of hers.'

'I don't know,' said Marion; 'she certainly frightened me with that last outburst. But I do feel sorry to think the poor old creature must be turned out of her house. Could nothing be done?' she asked, appealing to her father as he was just leaving the room. 'Surely, to leave her there for the rest of her few days would not be so great a boon.'

More than once, Marion had interfered successfully when some harsh proceeding was meditated on Mr Fortescue's estate, the merits of which happened to be discussed in her presence; and instances had occurred when she had been petitioned to intercede with their landlord by inhabitants at Old Park, when an abatement of the rent was sought for. Her father was conscious of the influence his child had upon him. His deep love for Marion, as for her mother, was, in truth, the one oasis in the desert of a heart that sternly shut out all other softening influences; while that love of her father was reciprocated by his child with, if possible, stronger force.

Now, however, Marion's word was powerless. With more of anger in his tone than he usually exhibited to her, he replied to the remonstrance. 'What! is it after the way that wretched old hag has insulted me, as you have just witnessed, that you would ask me to be lenient? Do you want it to be said that she cowed me? that I was afraid of her? that I granted to her curses what I refused to her entreaties? I'll not leave a stick over their worthless heads in a week.—And you, sir,' said his master, turning in a fury to Simmonds, the servant, who just that moment came in to remove the breakfast things, 'the next time you presume to admit any person in here without my knowledge or permission, you shall repent it—mind that!' The servant muttered something about her following him without his being aware of it; but Marion thought she detected a sinister look upon his face as he spoke, and felt satisfied, with whatever intent, that he had himself introduced the woman to the apartment.

It was on a Monday morning, early in the month of October, that what we have narrated occurred. The next Friday was fixed for the departure of the family at Old Park for England, which this year had been, by business arrangements, delayed longer than usual. Late the following day, Tuesday, Marion walked with Miss Fortescue about the grounds, taking a farewell of the sweet scenery, now peculiarly attractive in its autumn robe, that she loved so well, and where she would fain have lingered longer, listening all the while to her aunt's querulous expressions of dislike or apprehension, wondering 'what possessed Edgar, her brother, to put off their flitting so long,' declaring her conviction, that 'if they escaped what she did not like to think of in the Island, they'd be surely lost in the Channel, going over at such a time of the year.'

'The best thing, then, for you, aunt, would be to stay here for the winter,' said Marion.

'Catch me!' cried Miss Janet fiercely. 'Did you not hear,' she added, 'how another of those agents was fired at last week somewhere? No; whatever the perils of the waters, let me fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of the Irish. But, Marion,' said she testily to her niece, whom she caught at the moment laughing at her, 'I do believe nothing on earth would frighten you. I fancy you would almost like to be attacked by some of those wretches you are so taken with.'

'Not exactly, dear aunt; but I am just thinking how pleasant it would be to meet the Widow Sullivan—here, now, suppose, in this shady spot.'

'God forbid!' ejaculated Miss Fortescue, with a nervous grasp at the arm on which she was leaning. 'Do you see anything?' she asked, bending forward, and gazing down the dark walk that lay before them. 'Do you know, Marion, I shall never get the look of that terrible woman out of my mind. Everything horrible occurs to me just when I lie down at night. I always, it is true, cover myself up in the clothes; but that's of no use; and I thought last night of that witch with her fiery eyes and gray hairs, until—and she lowered her voice to an emphatic whisper—I was positively afraid to turn round in my bed.'

'Well, now, aunt, I feel that that poor woman is far more to be pitied than feared: I can only think of her pale cheeks and tears as she spoke of her dead husband.'

'Nonsense, child—all trickery. Don't tell me she cared about a man twenty years dead; you might as well try and persuade me that she'd cry over an Egyptian mummy. It wasn't her husband, it was her cabin she was thinking of. I hate such stuff!'

'Well, and would you like, aunt, to be turned out of a house you had lived in all your life, and round the very stones of which your heart-strings had twined, like the ivy round that old gable yonder?'

'I suppose I wouldn't like it at all; but that's neither here nor there. Your father means to put her out, and out she'll go, believe me, when Edgar Fortescue says it. But what business had she darning in and frightening people, as she did yesterday morning?'

Before Marion could well offer any reply, both the ladies' attention was attracted by the appearance of two men, who rapidly crossed the walk near its termination, down which they were leisurely going. Instantly, Miss Fortescue drew her niece back, protesting she would not 'go down there in the dark another step;' and insisting on her returning at once by the most open and direct way to the house. Marion escorted her aunt part of the way back, and then left her, promising to return to the house as soon as she had paid a farewell visit to her own little garden.

As soon as Miss Fortescue had separated from Marion, the old lady hurried as fast as possible home by the avenue, starting at every object that the now advancing twilight rendered less distinct, while her niece passed down the dreaded dark walk to the garden, at the remoter end of which was the plot of ground that belonged exclusively to Marion herself: it was merely a long strip, with nothing remarkable either for the picturesque in its position, or for the flowers it contained; but tradition marked it as the place that, long years ago, Mrs Fortescue, when a bride at Old Park, had taken a fancy to, and that she had often cultivated with her own hands; and this was enough to consecrate the spot in the eyes of one who cherished tenderly in her inmost heart the slightest thing that linked her to her lost and unknown parent. Her father, too, seemed pleased at her selection of this place for her special care, though nothing was said by either of the one to whose memory it was sacred. The flowers that used to grow there, she

preferred replacing, when they were worn out or dead, by others of a like kind, rather than with new or rarer plants; and thus, as far as she could, she kept the place changeless, just as her young mother had first arranged it. The purpose of her visit now, at so late an hour of the evening, was to do something to a bed of violets that were her peculiar favourites. These were planted in a narrow border that ran along an old, thick yew-hedge; so old that none knew when first it was made, and so thick as to serve for a fence, quite as effectual as the wall with which the garden was elsewhere enclosed. At the other side of this leafy barrier were some extensive pasture-fields, that reached from the garden to the boundary in that direction of the demesne of Old Park. Marion was busily engaged digging with a small garden-trowel round the roots of the plants, when her attention was aroused by hearing voices speaking in a low, earnest tone on the other side of the hedge. At first, she paid little attention to what was said, barely conscious that there were speakers there; but as they seemed to draw nearer, and the words became more distinct, she was startled from her indifference by catching this sentence, uttered in a subdued but most menacing tone: 'We'll not submit to it—we'll have revenge!' The next sentence was lost, as the person spoke almost in a whisper, and evidently had his face turned away from where Marion was stooping. Then another voice spoke, still in a low whisper, yet sufficiently near and distinct for her to hear every syllable. 'You are sure he will pass Johnswood to-morrow evening?'

'Certain; he must go and come that road. I know he's bound for where I say, and that it will be late with him too, as they have plenty to keep them.'

'You say he'll be alone?' again whispered the same speaker.

'I think so; at least'—

The rest of the sentence was inaudible. Marion recognised at once the voice of this last speaker—that of Simmonds, the butler.

'It matters not, one or two,' said the first voice she had heard speak, with the fierce utterance of smothered anger. 'Let him make his will, at any rate: we've taken the oath; and as sure as there's a God above us, to-morrow's sun shall be the last to rise on his cursed head.'

The men, of whom there were evidently three, were moving on as they spoke; and though the affrighted listener still heard the low murmuring of the voices in the distance, she could detect no more of what was said. These last terrible words, however, were enough; she felt as she heard them, and comprehended their fearful import, that the blood went like ice to her heart. For a moment or two she remained as though spell-bound, holding the trowel half sunk in the soil. 'Johnswood!—where was it?—to-morrow evening!' she repeated mechanically. Could it be her father against whom that fearful menace was directed?

One of the speakers was Simmonds, their own servant, a man she never liked, and who was closely linked, she had long suspected, with some of her father's bitterest foes. Then the scene of the preceding morning, the fierce anger of the old woman and her two sons—doubtless the very men she had heard planning their fell purpose of revenge! 'It must be,' she gasped out, as she rose from her stooping posture: 'my God, they are going to shoot him!' All the murders, actual or attempted, the different disturbances in the country, that had often been spoken of in her presence, seemed all before distant and unreal, and had rarely affected her with any personal apprehension; but now the thing seemed brought in a palpable form to their own doors. She shook like an aspen in the storm, and could scarcely move at the thought of the appalling danger that hung over the head of the one she loved best on earth.

Yet, what should she do? What use could she make of the information that she felt gratefully satisfied a higher Hand had made her instrumental in obtaining? Still, she remembered how peculiar a man her father was. To tell him instantly and abruptly of the conversation she had overheard, might be only to augment the evil. He was a stranger to the meaning of the word *Fear*, and very possibly would imagine a great deal of the matter to be an exaggeration; at all events, he was sure to consider himself personally a match sufficient for any danger whatsoever, and most probably would take no step at all to avert the threatened peril. Pondering all this, and striving to calm her inward agitation, she returned with trembling steps to the house, and at once, without meeting any one, sought her own room, lest her pale face should betray her feelings.

The dinner-bell found her still undecided what to do. She had time enough, however, she felt yet, to think and to act; so, making an effort to suppress all traces of emotion, she came down to meet her father and aunt at the dinner-table. Mr Fortescue had been complaining of a cold that seemed to grow heavier in the evening, and made him more than usually moody and silent; Miss Fortescue sat close by the fire, engaged at her everlasting netting; Marion held a book open before her, but while her eye was on the page, she read little, her troubled thoughts were far away. Incidentally, in the course of the evening, she asked her father where Johnswood was.

'Johnswood? About four miles from this, on the road to Hilltown—where,' he added, 'I am going to-morrow. But why do you ask?'

It was with difficulty she could reply. This worst confirmation of her fears that her father's answer supplied, sent a shiver through her whole frame. Now, it was certain. She did not know of his movements before; and, amid all her apprehensions, she clung tenaciously to the thought that she *might* be mistaken, and that possibly it was not her father who was referred to in the secret communications that had reached her. 'Oh, nothing,' she said nervously; 'I heard some one speak of the place. But, father, you surely won't think of going out to-morrow, and your cold so bad?'

'Tut, child! I have business at Hilltown with Mr Andrews that must be attended to, and I don't mean to let a cold in my head hinder me going out.'

'My opinion is,' said Miss Fortescue, with a kind of snort, 'that you'd go out, Edgar, if you were in a fever, only to shew your determination, as you call it. He's like a mule for obstinacy, is your father, Marion, and he calls it being *determined*. But, bless me, child, you look like a ghost; and I declare, Edgar, she's as cold as death,' added Miss Fortescue, laying her hand on Marion's. 'Do come close to the fire. As sure as my name is Janet Fortescue, you'll both be laid up with something horrible, and we'll be kept here for the winter! Will you do something to yourselves, for God's sake, and not run such risks,' continued the irascible old lady, as she started from her chair, and angrily stirred the fire. Her father noticed Marion's white face and troubled look, and anxiously inquired if she felt ill.

The evening closed in—bedtime came, and all separated for the night, while Marion still remained uncertain what step to take, and trembling at the thought that her hesitation and delay might be fatal. That night, too, set in with rain and storm, and the warring elements without seemed in terrible harmony with the stormy agitations of her own harassed mind. Something should be done in the morning, but what that something might be, she could not now conclude. To hint a thought of the matter to her aunt would be to throw her, she felt satisfied, into convulsions from terror. Any servant in the



house, she would now be afraid to trust, from the known perfidy of the one. The only resource she had left was, if no other way opened in the morning, to disclose all to her father, and to entreat him, by every argument that affection would prompt, to adopt the precautionary measures that such a crisis would require; and yet it was doubt as to the result of this appeal that formed the chief source of her anxiety. She had often heard him ridicule, as rank cowardice, some step taken by others that suspicion of danger had suggested, and boast that he'd face, single-handed, a whole regiment of assassins, and defy them to their teeth. Again and again she repeated to herself those dreadful broken sentences she had overheard, so as to put them in their strongest light to her father. And thus the night wore on, heavily and wretchedly; the rain and storm continued without intermission; the intervals of repose were disturbed by such appalling dreams, that the poor terrified girl dreaded falling asleep: her father brought home, pale, mangled, bleeding, and blaming her with his latest breath for not saving him when she could; then, a bloody hand holding a pistol at his head, and she looking on, with a parched tongue that could not utter a word, and a paralysed limb that she could not raise to strike off the murderous aim. Such frightful conjurations of the brain almost maddened her during that night of agony; and when the gray cold light of morning crept in through the chinks of the shutters, it was a relief to think that day had come at last, and that she might do something now. She was dressed and down much earlier than usual; the servants were still busied in the morning arrangements of the rooms below; and Simmonds, she fancied, regarded her more than once with a curious and suspicious glance, as she walked from room to room with a nervous restlessness that it was impossible to control. To divert any idea he might entertain, she inquired if he knew how his master's cold was, for she was uneasy, she said, about him, he was so unwell the preceding evening. He replied: 'He did not know, but would ask, if she wished.' This she declined, all the while inwardly hoping that his cold might be so heavy as to confine him to bed; anything to keep him within, even that one day. The storm of the night had subsided, but the rain still fell thick and fast; the decayed leaves were dropping swiftly with the rain, as Marion looked out from the library windows, and were borne along upon the little stream that the water formed for itself in every crevice of the ground.

When the breakfast-hour came on, Miss Fortescue appeared first, complaining of the cold, the wet, of everything within and without. Not minding her aunt's customary morning grumbles, Marion watched for her father's step, and soon heard him coming down. Her heart beat quickly as she went up to give her usual greeting, and ask for his cold. 'Very indifferent,' was the reply. A minute or two of silence, then the bell was rung.

'Let Michael take the black mare, and ride over to Hilltown, with a letter I will give him to Mr Andrews; he will find him at the Globe Hotel. I am not well enough to go myself to-day, as the weather is so bad.'

Simmonds hesitated a moment. 'I think it will clear, sir—at twelve probably.'

'I don't care,' said his master with a frown, 'whether it clears or not; do what I order you.'

'Humph!' said Miss Fortescue; 'wonders will never cease: you are getting sense, Edgar, as you grow older.'

'O that she would be silent,' thought Marion, from whose mind a weight had been magically lifted by that announcement of her father's.

Mr Fortescue walked without speaking to the window. 'Perhaps it may clear,' said he, as he looked out.

Marion feared to speak, and gave her aunt an expressive look, to intimate silence; she knew her father's mood full well, and that a single incautious word might alter his intention. She watched him as he left the room with trembling anxiety as to what he would yet do.

'I should not be at all surprised,' said Miss Fortescue, 'if your father went off to that place without coat or hat on him, in all that downpour, just to shew his determination, and tell us it would cure his cold.'

'Dear aunt,' she answered, 'you know father's way; please don't say anything to him—it would be so dreadful for him to go out in such a day.'

'He'll go, mind I tell you,' said her aunt sharply; 'and it will kill him too, I suspect,' she added, in a kind of soliloquy: 'his father died of obstinacy, and of nothing else.'

Mr Fortescue soon returned with a sealed letter in his hand, and again rung the bell.

'The black mare, sir,' said Simmonds, 'has lost a shoe, and I suppose you won't like Michael to ride one of the carriage-horses. I think, too, sir,' he added quickly, 'the rain is lighter, and it is clearing over the mountain.'

'He may ride his grandfather, sir,' said Mr Fortescue furiously; 'and don't you interfere about the weather. Let him take that letter, as I directed you.'

'He can ride my horse,' said Marion hastily, terrified lest her father might yet change his intention.

Simmonds withdrew with a sullen look. Miss Fortescue seemed almost disappointed at her prediction being falsified, and was about to speak, when Marion caught her arm, and stopped her; and soon after, to her inexpressible relief, she saw the groom canter across the Park on the black mare, notwithstanding the lost shoe.

Words could not convey the feeling of delight that Marion experienced at this unexpected extrication from her harassing distress; she heard her father say that Mr Andrews would be at Old Park to breakfast in the morning; and as to-day's danger was so providentially averted, she determined in her own mind to communicate privately to the agent all she knew the next morning, and consult with him what was best to be done, and how Mr Fortescue should be acquainted with the matter, which, if possible, she wished not to be until they were safely back in England. The first moment she could command, she sought the privacy of her own room, to pour out the overflowings of a grateful heart to One above, who had so mercifully interposed in the moment of extremity. The groom returned late with a verbal reply from Mr Andrews, to say that he would be at Old Park in the morning, when Marion determined she would commit the whole matter into his hands.

Mr Fortescue retired early to rest, while Miss Fortescue and her niece remained for some time together over the fire, both excessively nervous, the former constitutionally so, the latter rendered so from recent circumstances, and yet they talked of everything calculated to excite their minds to the utmost, as ladies in such a position frequently will. Miss Fortescue narrated, with startling energy, every story of murder and bloodshed she had ever heard of, maintaining they had all been perpetrated in the island; while Marion, not to be outdone, added her quota to their mutual delectation by dwelling on the different outrages that had actually been committed in the vicinity of Old Park for the past twenty years—thinking, all the time, if she were but to repeat the few brief sentences that conveyed to her ear the night before the intended tragedy, so narrowly escaped, what new sensations of terror she could impart to her poor aunt. At length their converse was brought to a close by Miss Fortescue starting

up and declaring she could stand it no longer, and that if they talked more in that strain, she would not be able to go up to bed at all. At the top of the staircase she remembered she had allowed her own maid to retire early in the evening, as she, too, was labouring under a severe cold. 'Bless me, Marion,' said she, 'I wouldn't venture to stay alone up in my room to-night; you must come and remain until I am in bed. Do you know,' she added, as they stood together by the fire in the bedroom, 'my great terror is, the moment I am stepping into bed, after the candle is out, that, some night or other, my leg will be caught. Do you ever feel that?'

'No,' said her companion laughing; 'it never occurred to me.'

'It will happen, then,' said Miss Fortescue, with the voice of an oracle; 'of course, I mean here, in the Island—not over there,' pointing to her dressing-room, to indicate England. 'But you must just wait till I'm in bed,' she continued, rapidly divesting herself of her clothes. 'There,' said she, at last—'good-night; and God keep you, child, from hobgoblins and Irishmen, or women either;' the last words being scarcely audible, as they came up remotely from under the bedclothes, where Miss Fortescue had taken refuge.

When Marion came to her own room, she opened the window-shutters. It was a lovely, calm, moonlight night; the broad openings in the park and lawn were luminous in the soft radiance, where the grass was wet from the recent rains, and various fantastic shadows were cast by the glimmering light as it shone through the still thick foliage of the trees. She put out her candle, and proceeded, as she was accustomed on such nights, to undress by the light of the lamp in heaven. Folding her white dressing-wrapper around her, she stood for a few moments, looking from one of the windows upon the still and quiet scene without. All in the house, as well as around outside, was hushed in the wonted silence of midnight; and leaning upon the window-frame, she contrasted the comparative calm of mind just then enjoyed, with the previous agitation, and the similar change in nature from the stormy scene of the last night: still by no means at rest as regarded the cause of her alarm, and feeling very much with her aunt, that until they crossed the Channel, she could not consider all as safe. Lost thus for a few moments in thought, Marion was roused from her reverie, as the deep silence was interrupted by a low growl from Nero, the old Newfoundland dog, just underneath the window. Again, the growl was louder and fiercer. She leaned forward as far as was possible, but could see nothing; then she fancied she heard some one whispering, in a soothing tone, to quiet the dog; and the next moment, she caught a glimpse of the animal as he turned the corner of the house. All again was still as death—not a breath outside, not a movement within. She remained for several minutes standing at the window motionless. All her slumbering apprehensions were for the moment awakened by the trivial break in the midnight stillness; but moving at last from where she stood, and resolving to keep down her nervousness, she knelt beside her bed in prayer before lying down to rest. Her nightly supplications were just concluded, and she was about to rise from her knees, when she thought she heard the soft step of some person moving on the lobby outside. Remaining still in the kneeling posture, she listened with that strained intensity that sudden alarm will cause. The step came closer—it seemed that of a person walking without his shoes; then, in a moment, there followed the sound of a hand feeling at her door, as if seeking for the handle; and immediately she heard the key very gently turned, and the click of the lock shooting home; after which, the muffled tread receded until lost in the distance, and all was hushed and quiet as before. In an instant,

the poor terrified girl was off her knees, and pressing her hands against her side, to try if she could calm those wild beatings of her heart, which in the agony of the moment were distinctly audible. 'O God!' said she, wildly throwing up her arms in the air, 'they are going to murder him in his bed, since they failed to-day; and I am locked in, and can't reach him. My father! my father! Why did I not tell him all, and he might have been prepared—might have been saved! But now'—and she shuddered with a sickening anguish—'now, it is too late; and, O God, his soul—his poor soul!'

Hurrying to the door, she tried if it were possible she had been locked in. Softly turning the handle, it was just as she had feared—the door was fast.

There are dreadful periods when nervous excitability in the human frame reaches the highest point of tension, and when either the mind loses altogether its equilibrium, and reason yields to the pressure, or a kind of reaction sets in, that induces a strange and terrible calm—the quietude of despair. This latter was the case with Marion Fortescue at this trying moment: she cared for nothing now, if only she could even see her father once more. She remembered that off her dressing-room there was a small clothes-closet, little used for any purpose; but that from it there was a door that led out upon a landing at the head of a back flight of stairs. She so seldom had recourse to that door, or went in to the closet at all, that she did not know if it could be opened. Quickly as the thought occurred to her, she hurried to the spot, stumbling over some old trunks that lay in her way: she tried the door; it, too, was fastened. For a moment, she felt as if every hope had failed. Could it be only bolted? Feeling—for all was darkness here—she found the bolt, and with much difficulty, from its rusty stiffness, succeeded in drawing it back. To her joy, the door then yielded to her effort, and she stood free upon the lobby. All seemed quiet above and below; no sound was audible but the monotonous tick of the great clock in the hall. Her first step was to reach her father's room. She paused outside for an instant to listen, and then noiselessly passed in. The blinds of the windows were down, but the shutters had not been closed, and the curtains were drawn back, and consequently the moonlight came in so clearly as to disclose every object in the room. Mr Fortescue was fast asleep, the gray hair falling on the pillow, one hand over the counterpane, and the face with a softer aspect than it wore in his waking-hours. Marion, gazing earnestly round the apartment, stepped lightly up to the bedside, and was just laying her hand on his arm to wake him, when the thought suggested itself—Is it wise to do so yet? He will be sure to rush down alone, encounter the assassins wherever they may be, and, a feeble, undefended man, fall an easy prey to their murderous attack. With this thought, she withdrew as rapidly and softly as she had entered, stood again upon the lobby, to see if she could detect any sound or movement, and hearing nothing, she gently descended the front staircase. The courage she now felt was almost supernatural; a kind of stony stillness pervaded her whole frame; she moved along mechanically, not knowing what she should do next, trusting to circumstances as they might arise, but with one thought foremost, freely to give up her own life, if thereby she might save the old man sleeping so unconsciously on the verge of death. All was quiet in the hall when Marion reached it, but a fresh breeze of night-air blowing full upon her cheek through the half-open door of the dining-room, and then the noise of a window being closed, convinced her that there was some one in that room. Then came a few whispered words, a stream of light through the opening from a candle or lantern, and she had barely time to glide in behind a large coat-and-hat stand at one end of



the hall, that effectually screened her from observation, when three men issued from the dining-room.

The foremost was Simmonds, the butler, carrying a small hand-lamp; the other two wore black-cloth or crape masks over their faces, with slouched hats and frieze coats, for she could distinctly see them as they passed her place of concealment. To her great relief, they did not, as she apprehended, go at once upstairs, but with Simmonds guiding them, proceeded in the direction of the servants' apartments below, their leader stopping for a moment to hasp back the cross-door at the head of the stairs, that opened with a spring and pulley, so as to keep it ajar. Every motion of the men was so strangely noiseless, that they seemed to pass along like apparitions, and it was only by the disappearance of the light that she knew they had turned, and were descending the second flight of the kitchen stairs. Immediately, and with as soft a step as their own, Marion followed the retreating forms, and watched them go into the butler's pantry, that was at the foot of and exactly opposite the staircase. At the top of its door there was a large pane of glass to help to light the room, and from her more elevated position on the stairs, Marion could observe their movements. The two men divested themselves of their disguise, while Simmonds hastened to lay some drink and other refreshments that he seemed to have ready at hand for them on the table. They spoke now, though still in an under, yet in a less guarded, tone. 'How long before the job is to be done?' asked one of the men.

'We'll give him half an hour,' was the reply. 'This early yet.'

'Shut the door, then, for there's a devilish blast coming in there.'

A gleam of light that darted for a moment through the opening as the direction was obeyed, shewed the anxious watcher above that the key was in the door outside: instantly the device of, she doubted not, Simmonds himself at her own room just before suggested a similar expedient. No sooner had the thought rushed into her mind than she was standing at the door—she scarce knew how she had descended—with her hand on the key; it turned almost without a sound. The chamber for the bolt of the lock was in the stone of the wall, so that once secured, it would be impracticable to open it from the inside. As the bolt shot, there was a sharp click. 'What's that?' said a voice in a tone above the low, deep conversation that was going on between them.

'What's what? I heard nothing.'

'I did.'

'Are ye gettin' cowardly, Jim, at the end?'

'No,' said the other with an oath, 'devil a taste; but I thought I heard something in the room with us.'

'Never mind,' said Simmonds; 'maybe you heard the cat after a mouse outside there. Here—a drop of this will put life into you.'

This much Marion heard as she reascended the stairs, when she then literally flew to the room above, where her own maid slept. On her she felt sure she could depend, though of all else just now she was doubtful. Her first idea was to hurry off herself for aid; to wake her father, unless at the last emergency she feared; nothing would hinder him, she knew, from rushing down in a fury to where the men were sitting.

'Elizabeth!' she whispered, as she softly shook the arm of her sleeping attendant—'Elizabeth! do you hear?'

'Miss, ma'am, O what!' cried the woman, starting up affrighted from her sleep.

'Get up quickly; I want you.'

'O Lord, Miss Marion, what's the matter? Is there anything wrong?'

'There is,' she replied; 'but speak low. Get up, put on your clothes, and be quick,' she added, almost dragging her from the bed.

In a minute or two, the waiting-woman had her clothes on, and stood, with a blanched face, to hear her young mistress's directions.

'Elizabeth,' said Marion in a low, earnest, but calm voice, 'you can do me a great service. We are this moment in terrible danger, and if help does not come soon, we may all be lost.'

'Lord have mercy! But, O miss, what can I do? What is it at all?'

'You must come down with me. I will let you out through one of the windows of the library; you must then run as fast as your feet can go to the police-station at the corner of the road, near the gate—you know where it is—and tell every man there to come up without a moment's delay to the house.'

'Oh, Miss Marion! Miss Marion! I wouldn't for a thousand pounds go through the park alone at this hour of the night.'

'Listen to me, Elizabeth; I have no time to talk with you; every moment is an hour,' replied Marion in a despairing voice. 'Simmonds the butler has brought in two men to-night to murder my father; they are now in the house. True, they are locked into the pantry, but any instant they may find it out, and escape through the window, or in some other way. I would go myself,' she continued, 'at once, but I must stay to watch over my poor father in this hour of danger.'

The pathetic anguish in the voice of her mistress went directly to the heart of the terrified but good-natured servant, who was sincerely attached to her. 'I'll go, miss,' she said, 'come what will. Sure, if they're locked up, they can't catch me anyhow; but oh, that smooth-tongued villain Simmonds!' and she shook her shut hand emphatically, as if she were aiming a blow at him.

'Hush! not a word now,' whispered Marion, hurrying her down stairs, fearing that her resolution might fail; and going to the window remotest from where the gang were imprisoned, she soon had the satisfaction of seeing the woman off like an arrow from a bow through the park towards the avenue-gate. Marion returned meanwhile softly to the stair-head, where she had stood before. The ruffians had not, up to this time, discovered their position, but just then Simmonds said he would go up and see if all were quiet. 'Why, what's this?' said he in a startled voice. 'Locked in, by God!'

'How! what!' exclaimed the others, starting up at the same instant in evident consternation. 'Curse you, will you bring the light!'

A moment's silent examination followed, then with an almost smothered yell, one of the men broke out into horrible execrations: 'Trapped! betrayed! You did it, you sneaking, white-livered ruffian you.'

'As God is my judge,' cried the trembling voice of Simmonds, 'I know nothing about it; the lock must have shot to when I slammed the door that time: it did so before,' he nearly shrieked, as his two associates, now rendered savage, seemed about to attack him. 'Stop, boys, stop!' said he soothingly, apparently shaking them off. 'Where's the use of this? Listen to reason, will ye! I tell ye, and I'll swear it by any oath ye like, I know nothing of that door being locked; and if ye make a work now, we're all done.'

'Shew us the way out, and we'll believe ye,' said one of the men in a panting voice of fury.

'There's no chance with the lock,' said he, 'and the window is barred; but see, I have tools here that will soon make way for us, and without much clatter either, through this wooden partition: it only divides us from the cook's pantry on the other side.'

He drew out a drawer as he spoke, a minute or two of hurried searching ensued, and then the three men seemed to set to work at the partition with an energy and speed that betokened early success to their exertions.

Terrified afresh at this, Marion again sought the window of the library from which she had despatched her maid, straining her eager eyes along the park, where the moon's white light made all as distinct as day—mistaking in her anxiety the dark shadows cast by a long line of elms in the distance for the wished-for forms of the advancing men—catching even where she was the increasing noise of the workers below, rendered desperate and exasperated by their detention. At length the louder crash of timber giving way, and then a pause and cessation of every sound, led her at once to conclude that they had effected their purpose, and made her resolve instantly to hurry up, and at all hazards awake her father.

To leave the window, pass from the room, cross the hall, and ascend the stairs, was but the act of a few moments, and yet the assassins were still more rapid, for at the first landing of the staircase a rustling sound a little above her made Marion halt, and peering forward into the gloom, she discerned, through the dim light that came from the closed window behind her, the dusky forms of the three men, motionless an instant on the lobby, and then literally gliding on towards her father's room. All the long pent-up terror and agony of the past reached the climax in this appalling moment, and finding that everything was now lost, and her father's destruction inevitable, strength and nerve gave way, and with one piercing shriek, that rang fearfully through the house in the stillness of the night, the poor girl fell insensible where she was standing. That wild cry came so unexpectedly upon the ear of the murderers, that one of them, in the utmost consternation, flung the weapon with which he was armed from his hand, and dashed down the stairs, followed by the others, who were alike startled and dismayed at this sudden interruption to their design. They were met in the hall by the police, who arrived at that critical juncture, and after an ineffectual resistance, all three were made prisoners.

All else of that memorable night was like a confused dream, and gathered up only in scattered fragments by the main actor in its trying scenes. She was, it seems, restored to consciousness by her aunt's terrific screams, imploring of some one to tell her how many people had been murdered. Then she remembered standing, supported by her father, in the lower hall, in the flickering light that a single candle shed upon the different parties so confusedly collected; the pale half-dressed servants grouped upon the stairs; the three prisoners, handcuffed, the policemen in a half-circle round them; the dark defiance on the face of the two, the blanched look of abject despair on that of the traitor-domestic; Mr Fortescue, though stern, yet grave and quieter than usual; two or three questions asked, and then the command to have the men confined in the guard-room of the barrack until the morning. A few more inquiries elicited all; and one silent but fond embrace assured Marion how deeply her father, who seldom betrayed emotion, appreciated all the past. He gently reproached her for not having told him at first; but then added: 'But, perhaps, except for what you, my child, have suffered, it has been all for the best.'

From that night Mr Fortescue was an altered man; a conviction of the peril he had so barely escaped wrought upon his mind, while the influence of his gentle and affectionate child was deeper and stronger than ever. Their stay at Old Park was necessarily protracted, as the men were to be tried immediately at a special commission. The unfortunate servant, it was found, belonged, like his two associates in guilt, to a Ribbon lodge, and anticipating but one issue to his coming trial, he contrived to put an end to himself in prison before the day arrived. The sentence of death passed upon the other culprits, was, by Mr Fortescue's intervention, to the surprise of all who knew him, commuted to transportation for

life. The Sullivans, it was ascertained, had nothing to do with this conspiracy (the men were son and brother to another noticed tenant), nor had they any connection with the Ribbon party of the locality; and Mr Fortescue, before he left Ireland, gave directions to have them reinstated in their farm.

#### AN ADVERTISING EPIC.

Even the most ardent admirers of the Poet Laureate are obliged to confess that he is better fitted to sing of King Arthur than of Garibaldi, of Fairy Land than of the stirring scenes of modern life. The work that is now expected from that master-hand is upon Boadicea, not upon Miss Nightingale; nor is the rumour that he has composed an epic upon the Underground Railway worthy of the slightest credit. As for Mr Browning, nobody supposes him capable of wasting his abilities upon any subject under five hundred years old. The *Life Drama* of Mr Alexander Smith was not quite the sort of experience (we hope) that occurs to nine people out of ten who will pass up Ludgate Hill to-day. And, in short, our modern poets, generally, decline to record the age in which they flourish, and the persons among whom they live and move.

That, at least, was the opinion of the present writer until yesterday afternoon, when at a friend's house he fortunately met with the *Londoniad*, and recanted upon the spot. The *Londoniad* is an epic which does not disdain to sing things as they are—or at least as they profess to be, *per advertisement*—and not only does it celebrate living persons by their proper names, but even adds their addresses and their postal districts. Ignorance of the existence of this work of genius was the more reprehensible, inasmuch as the present volume is the ninth instalment of the poem: *The Ninth Londoniad (complete in itself)*; giving a full Description of the principal Establishments in the Capital of England; being the continuation of a university Great Prize Poem on the Arts; also containing Pieces on some of the most celebrated Personages in the United Kingdom and in Canada, forming altogether Episodes in a grand national Poem on the Arts. By James Torrington Spencer Lidstone, late of Toronto, Upper Canada, &c., &c. This epic 'appears under the auspices of the Queen, the late Prince Consort (as President of the Society of Arts), the Emperor Napoleon III., the Emperor and Empress of Brazil, the king and queen of Greece (*sic*), Sir Charles Eastlake (president of the Royal Academy), His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (*friend of the author*), His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman (writer on art), the late governor-general of Canada, and other eminent individuals, dead and alive. The present edition is denominated 'the Canada and Exhibition Edition;' and since we believe that there is a limit to human perfection, even in the making of epics, we feel satisfied that it is the author's best effort.\* The reason of the title 'Exhibition' appears to arise from the fact, that most of the persons whose goods are herein celebrated in song were exhibitors at South Kensington; and we mention this, because the connection of certain other things in the talented volume is not so clear, and, indeed, is so much the reverse, that it would arouse suspicions of the author's sanity, were he not an epic poet.

Why, O why, for instance, in a work dedicated to the description of the principal metropolitan establishments, should there appear a poem upon the funeral of the late Prince Consort, with an almost too accurate and detailed account of the procession?

\* This view we find corroborated by the author himself at the conclusion of the volume. 'The present, which is the Ninth, will be found to be more interesting than any of the former *Londoniads*. The 10th, 11th, and 12th *Londoniads* are ready for press, and will be published at an early period.'

Valets and liv'ried Jagers, and Bailiffs, too, advanced;  
Here moved the Librarian, and there the Rider pranced;  
Solicitor, Commissioner, each in official robe,  
And hurriedly behind them came—whose business was to  
probe—  
Apothecaries and Surgeons, Physicians, men of skill.

His Royal Highness' Chaplains, to whom below was given  
The power to make a Prince of Earth appear a God in  
Heaven;

And here, with full credentials to that great funeral sent,  
The Representatives of Kings from o'er the Continent.  
Like meteors, through that damp cold day, gaudy Generals  
passed,

And Northern lights the Ensigns seemed upon the sleety  
blast;

The much-loved King of Hanover, and Belgian's Leopold,  
And here the Saxon Monarch, in sober garb, behold.  
Amid the tramp of cavalry—amidst that dreary din—  
Passed the bedizened proxies of the wide Zollverein.

There is a good deal of uncertainty in the public  
mind with respect to the Zollverein, and we are  
afraid that this last line of Mr Spencer Lidstone will  
not help to remove it.

Short prose notices of the deaths of distinguished  
Canadians who have passed away since the publica-  
tion of the last *Londoniad*, are prefixed to this charm-  
ing volume, each within an appropriate black border.

George Gurnett, Esq., several times mayor of  
Toronto, appears in the 7th *Londoniad*. I should  
like some one to send me his portrait, as I intend, in  
process of time, to present it in bas-relief or bust,  
with others of my friends, to the town-hall of  
Toronto.

'Archdeacon Stuart. I have just heard that he is  
no more. I wrote a poem on him while at Kingston,  
in which city I was his guest. He gave me a letter  
of introduction to our beloved Bishop of Toronto,  
when first the star of my destiny went westerling.'

At the conclusion of these elegiacs, a hand (as in  
trespass notices) directs our attention to the fact, that  
'the above-mentioned gentlemen (each in his own  
department truly great, and destined to live in the  
early history of Canada) were the friends of his (the  
poet's) youth.'

Before abandoning ourselves to our author's impe-  
tuous muse, after which all prose must needs be  
bathos, let us here mention that a few unmetrical  
pieces are addressed at the conclusion of the work  
to living persons.

'Captain Dick, proprietor. It was in one of his  
steamers that I first went from Kingston to Toronto  
with our dear Captain Gordon. Many a time, in the  
morning of my life, have I sailed with them (and  
always welcome) on the Western waters; and when  
I take a mental survey of the past, and cast a  
reminiscent glance on the days that have gone to  
the winds, tears start, and my heart and tongue move  
involuntarily with blessings on this fine-hearted  
family.

'I am indebted to that true specimen of the English  
gentleman, Charles Watkins, Esq., for the Toronto  
*Patriot* (regularly). Ex-alderman James Beatty used  
to send me the *Leader*; but it appears that it is in  
some way or other amalgamated with the *Patriot*, or  
the *Patriot* with the *Leader*, hence the reason I do  
not now receive it from the liberal and gentlemanly  
(original) proprietor. I remember his nephews well;  
I picture them often in the past.

'F. C. Capreol, Esq., Toronto. Something strikes  
me very forcibly, that, a long time ago, I met Mr  
Capreol in Oxford Street, London (England); but  
before the full conception of this extraordinary occur-  
rence had fully developed itself in my mind, I had  
lost sight of him. I need not say how much pleasure  
it would be to me to have spoken to him. In his  
dauntless energy, his almost chivalrous generosity,

and popular manners altogether, are the impress of  
destiny; and I behold in him one of the first presi-  
dents of Canada. He must know that the sentiments  
he holds find no echo, in our day, with "the powers  
that be" in England. The originators of his political  
decadence, no doubt, hoped for a giant race to wield  
their sceptre, and not men and women of straw.

'Samuel Platt, Esq., Toronto. I saw his name the  
same day that it was entered in the book of the  
Canada department, but there was no address attached.  
I wrote my name and address near it; but I suppose  
it was not seen, or not easily recognised. As my  
time is my own, I should have had much pleasure in  
accompanying him to various places in London, and  
my mother would have been delighted to have had  
him for a guest. She knew that he was the friend of  
her son in the days of exile.'

When Mr Spencer Lidstone seizes the lyre, how-  
ever, he is not always thus eulogistic; he describes  
the present governor-general of Canada as a 'titled  
loon,' and the British aristocracy as a worthless in-  
stitution, that may do for English people for awhile, but

In Canada 't doth raise sarcastic smile.

However, a truce to politics:

The hurrying Muse must go  
To welcome James Carter & Co.  
I cannot tell the first time when  
I heard of them as nurserymen—  
'Twas so very long ago,  
By the fair Ontario.

For them all letters should be sent  
To the Holborn Establishment.

The names and addresses of the tradesmen are  
printed in every case at the top of the poem written  
in their honour, but these are generally repeated by  
the Muse herself, in order to prevent mistakes. Thus,  
of Mr Duroch, Surgical Instrument Manufacturer,  
she sings—

The Royal Navy, Greenwich Hospital,  
And many more, that may not now detain  
The Electric Muse's fierce and fiery strain—  
Their instruments from our great man obtain.  
Those who, like me, have weakness in the ankle,  
And feel the effects of an old sprain to rankle,  
Should go to the illustrious Son of Science,  
In whom the most enlightened place reliance.  
Look round, and every article we see  
'Is manufactured of the best quality.'  
Anon Lace Stockings I behold, and Knee  
And Ankle Pieces, all fitted accurately.  
The famed Truss Maker, whom the nations greet—  
St Thomas's East, and No. 1 Dean Street,  
Borough, the postal district S.E.—  
Honoured in every land, and blest on every sea.

The ingenuity of our poet's invocations, considering  
the prosaic character of the subjects with which he  
has to deal, is deserving of all praise. Mr James  
Sholl's Anti-corrosive Writing Fluid, for instance,  
seems anything but promising as a theme for heroics;  
yet to this son of genius its very difficulties are not  
only grappled with at once, but positively made  
subservient to poetic ends.

Orally delivered by the Druid  
Were songs of old. Anti-corrosive Writing Fluid  
Now enwraps the ninth *Londoniad's* scroll,  
As by my glorious hero made, James Sholl.  
For sure despatch and legibility  
Its equal is as yet unknown to me.

Even Mr Spencer Lidstone, however, sometimes finds  
his subject too much for him—that is to say, impos-  
sible to be rhymed with.

What names shall now the ardent Muse adorn,  
Flashing over nations like a rival morn,  
But the world-famous firm, Bennett and Thorn?



All languages are our firm's reporters,  
Wholesale Manufacturers and Exporters  
Of Ropes—need here the Western Minstrel sing!—  
Lines, Twines, Cocoa-nut Fibre Mats Matting.  
Others in this peculiar line their card  
And prospectus have intrusted to the Bard;  
But they from him met very small regard.  
They stand with all their borrowed trophies shorn  
Before the practical firm who adorn  
Th' strain, the *real* manufacturers, Bennett and Thorn!  
190 High Street, in th' Borough, S.E.;  
The Manufactory in Bermondsey.

From these last lines we may conclude that the commercial world is generally desirous to be immortalised by our poet: whether some do not go the right way to work with him, or whether their names are found to be irreducible to metre, we cannot tell; but certainly where one pleases him, a great number appear to fail in doing so. Accordingly, after eulogising his favourite firm, he frequently adds a footnote to say how inferior to them are certain rivals, who have striven in vain to be enrolled in the *Londoniad*. After a beautiful poem in praise of Ford's Eureka Shirts, he adds: 'Brie, of Conduit Street, and a dozen others in his line, have presented me their cards; but all put together would not make a house equal to that I have here chosen.' Such stern justice it is almost painful to contemplate. A poetic laudation of one Cornelius Turner, a felt-manufacturer, concludes with similar detractory remarks on other persons. 'Four or five houses that took prizes for Kamptulicon, namely, Taylor and Harry (whom I decline altogether having), Gough and Boyce, &c., have presented me their cards, but I much prefer the Genius, the great Originator, &c., &c.'

The notes of our author are not in all cases of this invidious nature; after the usual metrical tribute has been paid to Rust and Co., coloured-glass manufacturers, occurs the following: 'I desire that no interest clash between a name introduced into the present *Londoniad* and that of the honourable and substantial firm, Messrs Ivey and Bellman. The serpentine column that I had from them I might have sold a hundred times over; it is the delight of many races; its equal was never seen on the Western Continent. It is in my library, and bears up the well-known stone statue of Minerva, by Frederick Ransome, a gentleman destined to shed additional lustre upon a family equally famous and well beloved.' The wealth of our poet, if in accordance with the style of his furniture, must indeed be almost beyond the dreams of avarice, and well becoming an author in his ninth edition; for, in speaking of his possible departure for his beloved West, he says: 'Although in Sculpture I have not been able to do much, as yet, except in a few choice works that now grace my own library, still, the luxury of wealth already gathered round me, to be distributed, at no distant day, in Canada, may be valued in its lowest estimate at a quarter of a million sterling.'

There is a grandeur of conception about Mr Spencer Lidstone, which, although it lasts only for half a line or so, exceeds, while it does last, the highest flights of Bon Gualtier's advertising muse.

A poem in praise of Mr Loewenstark, masonic jeweller, concludes as follows:

To Time's last year, and earth's remotest land,  
I bear his triumphs with a steady hand  
From 1 Devereux Court, Essex Street, in the Strand.

In the works of Mr Anthony Scard, bootmaker, we are informed that

Philosophy with Art and Science meet,  
For special attention he devotes to th' formation of  
the Feet.\*

\* Our author's notion of the licence of elision is as limitless, it may be remarked, as his own poetic soul.

Others may boast—'tis only boast and veriest talking—  
Here your Toes are not squeezed up while in the act of  
walking.

A breadth of *Tread*, them to expand, A Scard for Aye  
allows;  
For this Crispinian's diadem, thonged with beams, still  
glows

Upon the most immortal of his sons' radiant brows;  
Constructing for each foot Last to peculiarities (err  
Doth not the Muse), without additional charge to the  
purchaser.

We doubt whether any poet, British or foreign, has  
ever before gone so straight to the subject, and yet  
never omitted to mingle with it some element of the  
sublime, as Mr Spencer Lidstone. He descends from  
the dizziest mountain heights on an Ornamental Gilder,  
thus:

Like Cotopaxi's fiery flag,  
The ensign streams of Thomas Stagg.

A meteorological instrument maker is introduced in  
this fashion:

Her way through Sciences the ardent Muse she picks,  
And high above the living age she rears the name of  
Hicks.

A medieval metal-worker is thus apostrophised:

Not since the ancients shouted 'Io Pean,'  
And startled Samos' isle in the Ægean,  
Did ever any Art Muse allot her  
Bard a theme to equal thine, O Thomas Potter.

Of a flute-maker, on a new principle, he sings—

In '62, all nations have confessed  
That Clinton's Flutes were decidedly th' best.  
The new patent's known even to the poles,  
Granted t' 'em exclusively for graduated holes!

Competition with *my* hero! what would follow?  
The fate of Marsyas challenging Apollo.

Of one Thomas Glover, a gas-meter manufacturer,  
Mr Lidstone states, a little obscurely:

He sat like Jove on his meridian throne,  
And lighted up the world in '51.  
Th' Commissioners of th' International  
'62 as the only measure for his did call.  
Th' other two awards—tell 't to the nations—  
Were given for *manufactured imitations*.  
Hence, reasoning from analogy, arises  
The perfect idea, that he got three prizes.

The trade-puffs conclude with a eulogy upon one  
Mr Cadby, a pianoforte-maker, which is entitled 'The  
Cadbyiad, an Epic.'

Even the professions do not entirely escape the  
poet's commendation. The works of a certain literary  
lady are thus passed in poetic review, and duly  
eulogised.

In illustrated tracts I note  
That ever-welcome tale, *Frank's Sunday Coat*;  
*Confessions of a Decanter* my lays  
Inspire—as, too, *Drift*, a *Story of Waifs and Strays*.  
*Happy Evenings*, or the *Literary*  
*Institutions at Home*, shews that vary  
Her sails do never, by celestial breezes fanned.

Best and most ludicrous of all our author's produc-  
tions, however, is one composed in honour of a veter-  
inary surgeon, which we have kept for our last extract,  
on the principle on which the Irish postilion always  
'reserves a gallop for the avenue.'

Though I like not doctors, yet my Muse I will engage  
her

To write a glowing strain upon the immortal Major.  
From the Thames to Indus, Atlantic to Pacific,  
All hail, Joseph's Pleuro-pneumonia Specific,

For Horses, Cattle, Sheep, and all domesticated Animals—in many tongues and lands I've heard it stated,

Major's 'Calving and Lambing Drinks,' the 'Influenza Drinks,'  
Are all unrivalled on the earth, the Western Minstrel thinks.

My vessel walks the redd'ning Alps of a sunset ocean,  
Laden with 'Restorative Drinks' and Synovitic Lotion.  
The pioneer of the wilderness in leafy bower rests,  
To look over for his thriving friends Major's Medicine Chests;

By Science borne in light along, and by dint  
Of pure Philosophy, the 'Bursalgic Liniment,'  
Hail all th' grateful deeds o' Major, who doth attain  
To the world's approbation at No. 5 Park Lane.  
The standard of Science and Philosophy my hero hath unfurled,

The HOT AIR BATHS in WESTMINSTER are the wonder of the world.

The enlightened mind and noble heart (I write not here for stupid)

Will ever act the kindly part to poor dumb quadrupeds;  
For Sick Horses and Sick Dogs are th' appliances complete,

As for other quadrupeds, in Victoria Street.  
My Muse with the great Veterinary Surgeon  
Doth canter like a filly,

And her way over living hosts doth urge on,  
To 5 Park Lane, Piccadilly.

Here we close our extracts from this extraordinary Epic, and wipe the tears from our eyes. It is rather an unequal production of the poetic mind. Some strains remind us forcibly of the muse of the late Mr Robert Montgomery; while others do not rise above the poet Close, who might indeed have written the *Londoniad* himself, but for its fine prose, in which, it will easily be seen, breathes the spirit of no less a genius than Wilkins Micawber.

In *Hints to Advertisers*, published in this *Journal*\* a year or two ago, we thought we had culled the most astonishing specimens of commercial literature extant. We have taken, however, the very earliest opportunity, on becoming acquainted with Mr Lidstone's muse, of acknowledging our error.

#### THE PATENT-OFFICE.

A PATENT for an invention is a privilege granted by the crown to the inventor, forbidding other persons to make, sell, and use his invention without his consent. It is a sort of national recognition of the fact that a man has a right to the produce of his own brains. Until the year 1852, all this was done in a very complex, vexatious, and expensive way; an inventor went through terrible difficulties to obtain a patent, and then did not know how soon or in what way the advantages would be snatched away from him. A radical change was made in that year, placing all the operations under the management of a Board of Commissioners of Patents, consisting, *ex officio*, of the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney-general, the Solicitor-general, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-general for Scotland, and the Attorney-general and Solicitor-general for Ireland. All the machinery for granting patents was much simplified, and the expenses lessened. The cost still amounts to one hundred and seventy-five pounds, if every condition is fulfilled necessary to the obtaining of a patent for fourteen years; but the inventor may limit the time either to three or to seven years, at a much lower cost, or may abandon his claim altogether after only a few pounds have been spent. Whether the fees are not even now too high—whether it is not a little too bad that the

Attorney-general and Solicitor-general should each of them pocket about four thousand pounds a year out of these fees—are matters which we may leave law-reformers to discuss.

The most wonderful thing about the Patent-office, to persons not immediately concerned therein, is the vastness of the number of patents. The patents granted from 1711 to 1852 amounted in number to more than thirteen thousand—every one having its written *specification* or description of the invention to which the patent related. All were in manuscript, large sheets of parchment, with large wax-seals attached; and all were packed away in holes and corners, difficult of access, and difficult to read when obtained. A great work was resolved upon—to print the whole of these specifications, and to lithograph the diagrams or drawings relating to them. It took many years to do this; but it is done at last; and there probably does not exist in the world such another mass of printed matter relating to mechanical and manufacturing inventions. The same thing has been done in reference to all the patents granted since the commissioners began their labours eleven years ago. There are upwards of three thousand applications for patents every year, but only about two thousand of these arrive at such a stage of completeness as to need the printing of the specification. We may therefore say, in round numbers, that the old and new specifications now amount, together, to not less than thirty-five thousand—a prodigious testimony to our countrymen's ingenuity. But what reading it is! Crabbed, hard, dry, verbose, entangled, repulsive; scarcely intelligible except to patent-agents, and not always even to them. There are sixteen hundred volumes altogether of these specifications of patents, enough in themselves to form a library of no mean dimensions. The older patents few people have occasion to look at; but of those still in force, it is often important for other inventors to be cognizant. For this purpose, the commissioners have adopted a remarkably convenient plan: the specification of any patent can be purchased at the mere cost of paper and print, varying from two or three pence to three or four shillings, according to the bulk; they are nicely printed in small quarto, with lithographic illustrations where necessary. Besides keeping the whole of these always on sale at an office in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, the commissioners regularly present copies to nearly two hundred free libraries, institutions, corporate bodies, official departments, and foreign and colonial governments, so that the history of English patented inventions is speedily and widely known.

Never, we verily believe, was the value of good indexing and tabulation more thoroughly manifested than by Mr Bennett Woodcroft, who, as Superintendent of Specifications, has had the management of these matters from the day when the system was remodelled. It is of no use having thirty-five thousand curious and possibly useful things, unless we know where to find them when wanted. Now, we do know where to find all that relates to these specifications of patents. For instance, certain groups have been formed, comprising all the patents relating to one class of subject, whether it be Firearms and Warlike Materials, or Reaping-machines, or Smoke Consumption, or Screw-propellers. Then there have been prepared complete and distinct indexes of the whole collection—one *chronological*, or in order of date; one *alphabetical*, or in the order of the names of the patentees; and one *subject-matter*, which is in every way remarkable. Mr Woodcroft, taking a survey of the whole range of subjects for which patents are ever granted, grouped them under a hundred and fifty headings, and each heading into an average of four sub-headings, making six hundred in all. Thus, if we would know what patents there have at any time been for making pins' heads, or

bottle-stoppers, or elastic garters, or crinolines, or anything else, we shall be sure to find them here under proper headings. Then there is a *reference-index* of patents, containing references to any books or periodicals which have reported legal proceedings concerning patent-rights, applied to the several patents in proper order. Next, there is a series of very useful *abstracts* of patents, each giving, in brief, intelligible English, the substance of the matter contained in the clumsy and unreadable specifications. Every one has been carefully examined in turn to this end, and all have been grouped according to the subject to which the patents relate; such as weaving, spinning, plating of metals, watch and clock making, &c. Each series forms an octavo book in itself, and is sold separately. The price may be only sixpence, if there have been only a few patents on that particular subject; or it may be fourteen shillings, if, as in *weaving*, the abstracts fill more than a thousand pages of type. The object is, as the commissioners tell us, 'to enable inventors to examine for themselves whether their particular inventions had been already patented or not.' Down to the end of 1862, the number of abstracts thus completed was twenty-three volumes or groups; it is expected that all will be completed in 1866 or 1867, by which time the whole collection of patents will probably fall little short of fifty thousand—all open for perusal both in the full specification and in the abstract or abridgment. To leave nothing undone that may tend to render patent-lore intelligible to all, there is published a *Commissioners of Patents' Journal*, a twopenny paper which appears twice a week, and is crammed full of information.

The library belonging to the commissioners is of a special kind, remarkable for the number of works relating, in various ways, to technology and the productive arts. Various foreign nations and governmental departments at home presented valuable collections of reports, proceedings, statistical statements, &c.; private individuals presented collections which they had gradually formed; and the commissioners have appropriated a portion of their annual revenues to purchases in the same direction. Then there is a collection of scientific and technological journals, more complete, probably, than any other to be met with in this country, except, perhaps, at the British Museum. Weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly journals from France, Belgium, Holland, Russia, Prussia, various German states, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, India, Canada, and the United States are here to be found, besides a goodly variety belonging to and published in our own country. And all these things are so well catalogued and indexed, that not only can any one of them be easily found, but the group belonging to any one subject may be glanced at collectively. These literary riches are placed at the service of every decent man who knows how to value them. The books and journals, it is true, cannot be taken home for perusal, but they may be consulted for several hours every day. No fee, no introduction, is necessary—nothing but an entry in a book to denote who you are, and what kind of work you have come to consult; for, be it observed, it is not a place for mere desultory readers, gatherers of miscellaneous trifles; you must know beforehand what you want, and be able to assign some intelligible reason for wanting it. That done, John Jones may sit down there, and read all about the making of pins, steam-engines, boats, corkscrews, pumps, peppermint drops, and what not, or may read books and journals of a more scientific character—whether he be a master or a workman, a man of a thousand pounds a year, or only as many shillings. The Reading-room of the Patent-office is, however, uncommonly small.

Every day in the week, Sundays of course excepted, the doors of the Patent-office Museum are thrown

liberally open—not merely for six or eight hours in the day, as at the British Museum and the National Gallery, but in the evening also. It was in 1858 that the commissioners, puzzled what to do with their models and machines, begged a little spare room from the Department of Science and Art, there to establish a museum of their own. This was acceded to; and by the end of 1862 there had been just about seven hundred thousand visitors to the place. Various models and machines, pictures and diagrams, relating chiefly to the mechanical arts, came gradually into the possession of the commissioners, by gift, bequest, or purchase; and in the utter despair of finding any other depository, the commissioners were right glad to have one of Captain Fowkes's 'Brompton boilers' placed at their disposal. One large room contains all the articles; and skilful packing has it needed so to place them that neither may we break their own wheels and axles, nor our shins. Any young man will find an hour or two well spent here, in contemplation of the produce of many a teeming brain. Sometimes the original working-model, sometimes a model made after the invention had succeeded, sometimes the machine or apparatus itself, sometimes diagrams to illustrate it—are to be seen; and although many of them are musty and forgotten things, others are well worthy of attention. Sir Samuel Morland's original model of his counting-machine, constructed in 1666, is here; James Watt's original model of his steam-engine under the patent of 1769; William Symington's model of the marine engine which was the precursor of so much that is great in steam-navigation; and the model of one of the earliest forms of screw-propellers. Jordan's machinery for carding; spinning and weaving apparatus; clocks and watches of curious construction; machines for preparing fibres of various kinds for textile goods and for paper; leather-cloth; glass cylinders for calendaring; and a multitude of articles that fill a very useful shilling catalogue to describe—all are here either as specimens, models, or machines. There are, too, placed around the walls, the portraits of men whom we like to know about. When we think of the marvels of ingenuity that have done so much towards making England what she is, it seems to do one good to look at the portraits of Brindley, Smeaton, Newcomen, Watt, Boulton, Symington, Arkwright, Crompton, Cartwright, Strutt, Caxton, Myddelton, Telford, Rennie, the Stephensons, the Brunels, Maudslay, Donkin, Fairbairn, Nasmyth, Ransome, Napier, Trevithick, Whitworth, Doldond, Frodsham, Hadley, Ramsden, and a phalanx of others whose inventions have in various ways enriched the country. On one side of the museum is a complete set of the commissioners' publications—all the specifications and all the diagrams, where a visitor may study (for the books are quite open for examination and perusal) until he becomes either a very wise or a very bewildered man.

The commissioners, in reference to a building project presently to be adverted to, point in one of their recent Reports to the advantages which would result from the possession of more space for their museum. 'It is intended to make the Patent-office Museum an historical and educational institution for the benefit and instruction of the skilled workmen employed in the various factories of the kingdom; a class which largely contributed to the surplus fund of the Patent-office in fees paid upon patents granted for their inventions. Exact models of machinery, in subjects and series of subjects, shewing the progressive steps of improvement in the machines for each branch of manufacture, are to be exhibited. For example: It is intended to shew, in a series of exact models of machines, or in the machine itself, each important invention and improvement in steam-propellers, from the first engine that drove a boat



of two tons' burden, to the powerful machinery of the present day, propelling the first-rate ship of war or of commerce. The original small experimental engine that drove the boat of two tons' burden, above referred to, is now in the museum, and is inscribed No. 1 in the series of propellers or models of propellers. If this idea can be carried out, it will supply a want that has long been felt by ingenious practical men, and that no institution in England has hitherto satisfied.

All, however, depends on whether the commissioners can build a new structure. They are, simply and truly, in lodgings in Southampton Buildings, and on sufferance at South Kensington. The dark, poking, small, miserable rooms and passages in the first-named locality are utterly unfitted for the purposes to which they are applied; and it is quite amazing that so much has been done in such a little place. The commissioners do not want to come to John Bull's purse for the money; they are—a very surprising novelty—rich enough of themselves. Ever since the change of system in 1852, a large profit has accrued from the granting of patents, after defraying every charge for fees, salaries, compensations, books, paper, printing, lithographing, and stamp-duties; and these accumulated profits now amount to something like £130,000. The commissioners ask permission to build, out of this fund, a handsome structure that will contain everything belonging or pertaining to patents—fire-proof rooms for the original specifications, store-rooms for the printed copies of them, library, reading-rooms, consulting-rooms, and museum,—all arranged with the utmost attainable convenience for the public. This, by the terms of the act of parliament, they cannot do without the consent of the Treasury; and the Treasury has been so bewildered by the multitude of councillors concerning the National Gallery, the British Museum, the South Kensington Museum, and Burlington House, that five years have been spent in doing—nothing; and so the commissioners must e'en lodge in their comfortless little apartments some time longer.

#### A BULL-FIGHT WITHOUT SPECTATORS.

ENGLISH sportsmen, when they get their legs under the mahogany, after a sweltering September day, are quite sure to recount its incidents: how Ponto stood, and Don backed him; of Smith's tremendous long shot, and Brown's missing that hare in the turnips, whilst Robinson is laughed at for his constant failures to touch a feather. All who have lived a stirring life by field or flood like to fight their battles over again; and I have thought perhaps the following adventure—one of many that occurred in fourteen years 'of a hunter's life' in Texas—might prove interesting to those who have had no opportunity of leading the wild, free, roving life of a western hunter.

Over the prairies and through the forests of Texas roam immense herds of half-wild cattle, which are only penned twice a year, by the stock-owners and their assistants, in order to mark and brand the calves, count the increase, and take stock of the beves fit for killing. Of course, hundreds in the forests are overlooked every year, which become wholly wild, and join other wild herds. These, unlike the marked and branded cattle, which have been occasionally handled by man, never venture on to the prairies except at night, and then only for a very short distance from the friendly shelter of the woods, to which they retreat at the first faint light of morning, and in the most impenetrable recesses and dense cane-brakes of which they spend the day, being more shy and unapproachable than even deer. All unmarked and unbranded animals over a year old are the property of any one who chooses to catch or kill them, the rancheros believing, and with reason, that could all the wild ones be destroyed, there would be less loss

amongst their stocks from the other cattle being enticed away.

Some years ago, I was employed as a hunter on a plantation, to provide both the whites and negroes with meat—venison, beef, and pork. The clearing was on the banks of a very large river, the Rio Brazos de Dios; and the forest for many miles round was more heavily timbered and had more undergrowth than any other I had ever hunted in, in Texas. There were here and there high, dry, sandy ridges, on which grew the beautiful dark evergreen wild-peach, and the live-oak, and these were tolerably open; but sometimes you came upon low swamps, which produced nothing but the dwarf palmetto, the broad fan-like leaves of which make, in a few minutes, a thatch which will shoot off the heaviest thunder-shower. The wilderness, generally, however, was a dense mass of upland and dogwood thickets, with perhaps a little more than the usual amount of rattan and wild-grape vines festooning the larger trees. Now and then, too, you came upon the banks of a lake, on the margin of which could be seen sunning themselves many an alligator, the *el legarto* or lizard of the Spaniards, who explored the country, and to a corruption of which it owes its name. Rather a difficult hunting-ground this, either on foot or horseback; still, such a jungle was the favourite home of all kinds of animals—wild-bull, cougar, leopard and tiger-cats, black bear, wild-hog, Mexican hog, and wolf. All these, except the last, are animals 'worthy of your steel.'

There are few summer mornings in Texas that are not beautiful. With a bright sun, a fine south-east breeze blowing off the Gulf of Mexico to freshen and cool the air, none fail to feel their charms; but to the hunter it is inexpressibly delightful to ride through those grand old woods, almost awful in their silence, for hardly any sound breaks it, save the drowsy hum of a bee, or the occasional sharp blows of a woodpecker, as he seeks his insect breakfast upon some decaying tree. There is, too, just that dash of danger so captivating to the real Nimrod, and which our stubble-brushing, stay-at-home sportsmen can never feel. How can they ever know those woodland duels, fought without seconds, where a sure foot, quick eye, and steady hand alone avail to make you hold your own. What if you miss a hare in England? It is nothing. What if you fail to bring down a wild-bull in his charge? Why, unless your guardian-angel is to the fore—to use an Americanism—'salt will not save you;' none but the vultures will ever know how or where you fell, and a rusty gun, a rusty hunting-knife, and a bleached skeleton will be your only monument. Never does any one feel more helpless than with an empty gun and in the presence of wounded large game. A bear, there is some chance with, because in his attack he gives you an opportunity of bringing the hunting-knife into play; but the weight and rush of a bull are fearfully against you, unless you have the activity of a wild-cat. In all close encounters, weight having an immense advantage.

It was on a beautiful summer morning when I started to kill a beeve, mounted on my mustang, armed with a 14-gauge double-shot gun of Deane's, which threw a ball patched with greased fawnakin of very nearly an ounce-weight, and accompanied by my three dogs, Jack, Midge, and Killdevil, broken to run nothing but cattle and hogs. They were trained to keep at the heels of my horse, so that I might sometimes, as I very often did, ride suddenly on to cattle, and get a shot or two. Of course this could only be done by riding up-wind, a point a backwoodsman never neglects, as the sense of smell in most animals is superior to that of hearing, and, I am quite sure, with all the deer-tribe, keener than even that of sight. The dogs were allowed, whenever we crossed the trail of hogs or cattle, to go and bring them to bay. On this occasion, I had been riding for about an hour due west from the plantation, without

seeing anything of the particular game I was in search of. I had arrived at the edge of an upawn thicket, when all at once the dogs dashed into it, and in a few minutes I heard them open, and a tremendous rush being made in my direction. The stout poles of the thicket crashed, and bent like wheat-stalks; and then, with head down, and tail straight out, level with his back, a mighty bull came thundering on, about twelve yards from where I sat. Although mine was as steady a horse under fire as ever was ridden, still the rush and fierce barking of the dogs made him fidgety, so that I placed both bullets too far back in the bull, the upper one, as I afterwards discovered, grazing the kidneys, and the other entering the paunch. Having carefully loaded my gun, and hid my horse in a thicket, well knowing that he would charge my mustang as quickly as he would me, I proceeded on foot to where I heard the dogs holding him at bay. I found them in a palmetto swamp, some two hundred yards from where I had first shot at the bull, and tried to stalk him, by crawling up under the shelter of the palmettos. But the ground was so soft that I sank in over my ankles at each step; and the palmettos were so thick, and their harsh strong leaves rustled so much, I could not approach for a certain shot. In such mud, without even a sapling to dodge round in case I failed to drop him, I thought it better to hunt him on to different ground and thicker timber. The dogs then having presently made the swamp too hot for him, I had the satisfaction of seeing him move to more favourable ground. I took advantage of a large live-oak to advance upon him, and getting within about thirty yards, fired. Unfortunately, just as I pressed the trigger, he lowered his head sideways to gore one of the dogs, and I missed him. In an instant, like lightning, he made for the flash. I stood out, and with perfect coolness waited till he was about six steps from the muzzle of my gun, then fired again, but, to my horror, he did not drop at my feet, as I fully expected. His hot breath was now in my face, his red eyes close to mine, as I turned to run round the tree, when my foot caught or slipped, I know not which, on one of the above-ground roots, and in falling, the bull passed one horn through my light hunting-shirt, tearing most of it off me. Luckily, the impetus of his charge carried him twenty or thirty yards beyond me, and my gallant dogs coming to the rescue, gave me a second or two to swing myself up the tree. There was no time to load, nor even to pick my gun up, and I was barely out of his reach when he was underneath, pawing the ground with his feet, bellowing hoarsely, his eyes bloodshot, the foam tinged with blood, covering face, and neck, and chest—the incarnation of baffled rage. Whether his horn or head had hit me, I do not know, all passed so rapidly, but I was stiff and sore for several days after. Having recovered my breath, and the shock occasioned by my fall, I began to think what to do to rid myself of my savage jailer. Hunters are or ought to be prompt with expedients for almost any possible case, and my determination was at once formed—to go higher up the tree, find a bough that would do for a spear-handle, and bind the haft of my hunting-knife to it with some strips torn from the remnant of my shirt, and then to try to stab him where the head and neck join, as he often came quite underneath me. I had hardly regained my station on the large bough—having cut a stout stick which would answer my purpose—when I noticed some unmistakable signs of ‘grogginess’ in my shaggy opponent; his head was lowered, and he was swaying from side to side—a riddle easily read; internal bleeding from my first two shots would, I could see, soon close his career, though he made many a gallant effort to shake off the weakness he felt surely coming upon him. Brave to the last he stood, but at length toppled over. For a moment I thought he might be ‘playing possum;’ but as he took no

notice of the dogs who were licking his wounds, I saw the game of life was up for him, and descended from my perch, thankful for my escape from what my western friends would designate as ‘a tight place.’ Having picked up and loaded my gun, and rewarded my faithful dogs with the offal of the quarry, I rode home, from whence some negroes and mules were despatched to skin, quarter, and bring in the carcass as game a brute as ever fell.

In recounting the foregoing adventure, I have once more, in thought, crossed the Atlantic, sailed over the deep blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico, ridden through the sea of grass of a prairie, felt the solemn silence of the forest, and lived the life I love, and hope soon once more to enjoy again.

#### FRIENDSHIP.

I FEEL the more, the more I know,  
That Friendship is a thing apart,  
A mute assurance of the heart,  
A faith, that little cares for show.  
A sympathy of soul and soul,  
Which feel themselves, in spite of birth  
And all the petty castes of Earth,  
Two halves of one Eternal whole.  
That asks no change, if undecieved,  
And shuns to court the vulgar eye,  
Contented in obscurity,  
If it believes and be believed.  
A lamp, that needs but little oil,  
But is with its own burning fed;  
A virgin stream, that will not wed  
Or mix itself with earthly soil.  
A beauty, that no tongue can tell,  
That underlies our common dust,  
As, bright beneath the rough-ribbed crust,  
Glistens the glory of the shell.  
Felt in the pressure of a hand,  
Though face and voice be stern the while;  
Sent in the message of a smile,  
That only two can understand.  
How sad for him that this hath known  
In one with rarest virtues graced,  
Close-linked by kindred ties, or taste,  
Once more to feel himself alone.  
A pang that brooketh no relief,  
Save that from sad remembrance wrung—  
Sorrow that poets oft have sung  
In true nobility of grief.  
That sweeter far than comfort is,  
A sacred relic, closely clutched;  
A wound, too tender to be touched  
By any stranger hand than his.  
O Friendship! all too mean a name  
For something, holier than will,  
That keeps itself unspotted still,  
And purely flows through Sin and Shame.  
'Tis only when soft Passion lends  
A brighter heat, a flame as pure,  
It claims its true nomenclature,  
And into Love the loveliest blends.

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